

dering this. 'But, Ruth,' he began presently, 'it wouldn't be wrong to kiss—me?'

"There was no answer."

"The Boy pressed on. 'Do you think,' he insisted, 'that it would be wrong to kiss,' he edged closer, and there was a dangerously subtle accent on the word, 'me?'

"Ruth had captured and put on the sunbonnet: the reply seemed to come from very far back among its depths. 'I cannot find it in my heart,' came falteringly from the sunbonnet, 'that it would be of a woeful wickedness to—kiss—thee.'

"It was just at this moment that a shadow fell across the opposite bank. 'It is Father,' whispered Ruth, rising."

"Friend Bethlehem looked at them closely and long. After a space he dropped his head upon his breast, shaking it slowly twice or thrice, and, passed on."

"That evening after Ruth had a message, shyly delivered. 'I did speak to Mother,' she said. 'She told

me I must refrain from loitering with thee beside the brook; but that, if thee desire, thee can walk yonder and see me at the house.'

"They were all on the porch when the Boy walked 'yonder.' The Successful Dramatist broke off abruptly, and looked at the New Star. "It was that porch," he said, "that you entered an hour ago. I—I had a fancy to hear your footsteps cross it."

The New Star rose noiselessly and crossed to the window, looking out upon the weather stained boards and the trailed woodbine across the lattice. The moon showed all distinctly, even the hollow worn by passing feet in the middle of the old stone steps.

The Successful Dramatist crossed the room and stood beside her. "It was there," he spoke musingly, "that the Boy sat, on the upper step. And over on the high backed settle Friend Bethlehem, and in the wooden rocker Ruth's mother. But the little stool, on line with the step whereon he sat, as well the Boy had noted,

Ruth's low stool, that is no longer there. It is put away among the memoried things."

"Oh!" cried the New Star, with a soft intake of the breath. And then, with that Heaven-given sympathy, "Would it hurt too much," she questioned, timidly eager, "to go on?"

The Successful Dramatist shook his head. "Not to you, O Child of the Comprehensive Eyes," he said, and for an instant his hand lay over hers, and she thrilled at the touch. "I think," he spoke musingly, "that I brought you here to tell it."

THEE may call at times to see Ruth," said the mother; 'though thee are both but children.'

"The Boy interrupted her with more ardor than manners. 'Why, I am a man!' he cried. 'I am eighteen! And I am going to be a great man, before long!'

"Gently the mother laughed; but Friend Bethlehem,

Continued on page 15

ON A DESSERT ISLAND

Entry No. 54 in Our Prize Story Competition

By ROY L. McCARDELL

WHEN I was coming back on the good ship Arabic from the bully tour of Europe I had last fall, the stateroom of Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore was right next to mine. On the passenger list he was simply T. S. Skidmore; but Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore was the name in full on the engraved card he tendered to me as we sat on the sunny side of the main deck, for we were steamer chair neighbors too.

He was not the most popular man on the ship by far. He was the storm center of many a fierce row in the smoking room, and in any general discussion on ship-board he was always a most vociferous minority leader. Were the subject "Does two and two make four,"—and all usual extemporaneous discussions in mixed assemblies are generally on such dead levels of the obvious,—Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore would take and hold, with all the honors of war, the eager and angry negative.

So, with a forty-eight hours out from Queenstown, the dull, lists of the great deep—the old ladies of both sexes who play whist in a way to make the angels weep, the buyers coming back who get up the deadly deck games, and the people who tell you they take the slow ships not because they are cheaper but because they are more comfortable—all left Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore severely alone.

But I liked him because he was different. He looked different too. In the first place, he had a face colored like a meerschaum; and possibly with the same substance, nicotine, for he smoked incessantly.

He was bald of head and barreled of body, and he had a long straight nose, also highly colored, projecting from the exact center of a fat, smooth shaven face. He wore a flat-topped round felt hat of pearl colored felt, such as gilded youths wear in Spain, and he clothed his outer self in a short, heavy peajacket of woolly blue and check trousers of black and white. Around a flaring stand up collar, such as the late Mr. Gladstone affected, he wore a bright green poplin cravat, in which shone a beautiful star sapphire set in gold. When exercising round the deck Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore thrust a black knobby stick, as aggressive looking as himself, between the crook of both elbows and his back, and, stiffly erect, trotted about with such a fierce, militant air that if any of the other promenaders had been disposed to laugh at the queer figure he made they one and all felt it the better part of valor to restrain themselves.

Not that Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore hadn't a sense of humor. In fact, he gave me two reasons to suspect he had. The first was in allusion to his green necktie beneath his incarnadine jowls and his still more crimson nose.

"By George, Sir!" he said, "this cravat embroiled me greatly in Ireland, Sir! It got me in a great deal of acrimonious discussion, Sir! They did not like to see the Red above the Green."

Another reason that made me suspect he had a keen sense of the ridiculous was when we broached our various occupations in life, as deck acquaintances invariably do, and he said to me, "Well, Sir, we're well met! I'm a newspaper man too; but I saved my money and have retired on it."

But what really brought us close together, and what inspired Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore to tell me the story of his peculiarities and his life and the great adventure of the Dessert Island, was prefaced by an apology he made me for the almost daily rows he had with his room steward.

From what I could hear, and I could hear it almost every word, Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore had the menus for luncheon and dinner brought to his room aforetime, and it was the occasional presence or absence of some viand on the bill of fare that incited him to ebullitions of rage storms at sea, so to speak, which rose high above the kick of the screw, the rattle of the ash hoists, the screams of skylarking children on the decks, and the slapping of the waves against the hull.

What this one thing in particular was that so upset him was never mentioned; but I found out. For, after a particularly violent outburst over the dinner card brought to him early one afternoon by the room steward, he joined me on deck, after I had come up from a meal at which he had not been present. He was still red and heated with his passing rage, and, as he plumped down his steamer chair beside me, he looked at me curiously

and then remarked:

"You heard me raging that ninny of a steward, and now you see me doing without my dinner. I guess you think I'm crazy—what? Well, listen! You have a good face and plenty of it, and I'll unbosom. Yes, Sir, I'll tell you all, Sir, all!"

And here follows the story of Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore, as he told it to me on the deck of the good ship Arabic, in mid-Atlantic on the seventh of September, 1910.

TO begin with, I am not crazy. I have my peculiarities, I admit, and I am what dull minds call 'eccentric.' This is their way of stating that I do not agree with them in their love of the bald, the trite, the conventional, and the obvious.

"It is true that I make myself unpopular in many places by declaring, at inappropriate times, that men who play the piano are no good, and the better they play it the more worthless they are. It is also true that I have always warned the world at large against those who come bearing beards, and that I hold firmly to the theory that men who are military mad are sapheads. Here too I will also admit that my prejudice against men whose name is Miller is most pronounced, and I have been vituperated and even assaulted because of my open insistence that were I in a position of power I should never employ anyone having the name, nor would I wittingly or unwittingly mingle in any assembly where any Millers were present.

"Now, the Millers are a numerous race and prone to pugnacity, and I cannot criticize my friends for their insistence upon my confining myself to a list of safe subjects for public discussion and keep the conversation away from male piano players, facial foliage, militia enthusiasts, and men whose names are Miller.

"In all honesty, I must admit that it is a bad beginning for a day's pleasure or the evening's enjoyment when bystanders with beards, persons with musical inclinations, or strangers who bear the name of Miller take exceptions to my strictures, although not addressed to them, and the situation resolves itself, in theater lobbies, in restaurants, the street, and public conveyances, into a war of words, mutual exchanges of heated epithets, and oftentimes physical violence.

"I can well perceive how the patience of my friends has been sorely tried on many occasions by my lack of tact in these regards. I have had the most charming of women refuse to go to the opera or theater with me while I wore my dress coat buttoned to hide a gory shirt bosom—my nose will bleed most profusely at the



"Great Foaming Bulges of Boiled Rice Mush-roomed Over the Deck."

slightest encounter. Then too, candor compels me to say that a brawl is not a pleasant prelude to an evening's enjoyment, and very few ladies are capable of following the score of the opera or the plot of the play when a few moments previously they have witnessed their escort being hit on the nose by a, until then, comparative stranger.

"But I am not crazy. My mind is keen and alert, my intentions are good, and I endeavor to be just with all men, and to respect the opinion of others if they simply will give some heed to mine.

"Then too, my efforts to remove the unnecessary odium from many so called 'menial' occupations has brought, it must be confessed, nothing but the cheap ridicule of the fatuous upon me. Most conspicuous along this line of uplift, of course, was my endeavor to raise the standard of bootblackery, that it might be recognized as fellow to the art of brush daubery in color. In other words, that, as bootblacks worked in oil and water colors and achieved artistic work on leather, why not compel all shoe shining to be done in studios rather than on street corners? I held and truly, that the artistic environment of a studio would soon exert its

refining influence on the artists in black and russet.

"To this end also, it may still be remembered, I advised that the raucous cries of 'Shine!' 'Polish!' be interdicted, and that solicitations of custom be made by the artist bootblack, standing in front of his shoe shining studio, in velvet coat and sash, a Barbison beret upon his head, his blacking ready upon a palette while he chanted melodiously:

"Shine! Shine! Who wants a polish?
My name is Reginald, always convenient
My blacking is excellent,
My brushes are sterilized,
My hands they are manicured
To suit the fastidious.
I brush you off with a vacuum cleaner.
Step this way, Gentlemen, and have your boots enameled!

"Are these idle idiosyncrasies? Is this asking too much? For, don't you see, can't you see, that it is not what things are, it's what we call them, that makes them important? A rose by any other name would sell much cheaper.

BUT, to begin at the beginning, and to speak no more of the whims and the peculiarities that must lie lightly on me, since I can so lightly recount them, I will disclose to you the cause and the origin of my one great dislike and distaste which is so incomprehensible to others who have not borne what I have borne with, and who have not endured what I have endured, because their smug, dull days pulse dully by.

"I was, as you know, a newspaper man. Late in August and early in September in the year 1900 I was on my vacation, and was spending a few weeks with friends of enviable means at their beautiful place in Biloxi, Mississippi, not far from Mobile.

"On the eighth of September of that year tornado and tidal wave devastated the Gulf Coast, and the fair city of Galveston was deluged, destroyed, battered down to a tangle of timber, debris, and the dead. The storm smote it with wind and water—and Galveston was not.

"It will be remembered that, when the full extent of the disaster was known, every effort was made quickly to send food, medical attention, and shelter to the few who survived.

"I did not wait to get orders. I wired to my paper, 'The New York Continent,' and asked if I should proceed to the scene of death and destruction, or inaugurate, where I was, measures for speedy relief, and secure food, clothing, and medicine to be despatched at once from Mobile.

"The reply I received was as follows:

"T. S. SKIDMORE, Mobile, Ala.

"Charter first available steamship, as railway communication is cut off, and proceed with all speed with food and shelter tents. Spare no expense. Mobile banks have been wired to honor your drafts on Continent.

"JOBSON, Managing Ed.

"I found the tramp steamer Stirling Castle of Glasgow loaded with rice at the Mobile docks. She was on the point of sailing, with her cargo of rice stowed in the main hold and kerosene in barrels in the lower. The Stirling Castle had cleared from Perth Amboy, New Jersey, to Mobile with the kerosene. This was for London, as was the rice in bulk now going aboard.

"Tramp steamers—the little cargo boats that traffic up and down, as Kipling sings—are any man's for hire. A half-day's cabling to the London agents of the Stirling Castle, and this sturdy unit of England's mercantile marine and the cargo already aboard were at my disposal.

"Five thousand bushels of rice had already been stowed, far more than might be needed at Galveston; but there was no time to unload even part. To this plethora of rice, 'The Continent,' aided by the generous people of Mobile, who would not be denied, added, as expeditiously as it could be done, case after case of canned goods, three hundred crates of fresh eggs, a hundred barrels of flour, fifty hogheads of sugar, and ten thousand loaves of bread.

"The completing of the cargo was more in the nature of a stacking than an orderly stowing away. The eager and excited citizens of Mobile turned in with a will to help the scurrying stevedores.

"Whole stores were commandeered of all their good things,—jellies, spices, everything, not to forget the clothes, shoes, hammocks, tents, etc., that were piled aboard to augment the deckload. Coal was rushed to the bunkers and the watertanks attended to by the practical and enthusiastic. There was no thought but help, speedy help, substantial help.

WE cleared the harbor hastily, the customs men coming out in the launch with our papers, while the thronged wharves were undulating lines of white from the handkerchiefs waving us godspeed. The harbor craft saluted us in bass and treble from whistle and siren, and yachts and tugs stood out with us to sea, as though their very anxiety and desires would augment our speed.

"The Stirling Castle was a composite steamer,—steel hull and wooden upper decks and works, steel bulkheads and divisional decks. She was seven thousand tons' burden, three hundred feet long, and forty feet beam. She was speedy for her type, and could do twelve knots when pushed—and she was pushed.

"I arrogated to myself the position of chief supercargo; though I must confess it was authority without much executive ability. Fortunately, the real supercargo, a young man from Belfast, knew his business, and on our second day out we had at least some tangible idea of our stores; moreover, they were things to eat and things to wear and there was no red tape tied to them.

"My only desire was to be able to get dockage facilities of some sort when we reached destroyed Galveston,



"Floating on a Continent of Rice Pudding."

and to turn my supplies over as speedily as possible to the authority I might find there, or distribute them myself as best I could for the relief of the naked, the hungry, and the distressed, in case order had not come out of chaos.

"We did not know what had been done at New Orleans and elsewhere; but we felt proud that Fate and Fortune had given it to us at Mobile to be among the first, if not the very first, to bring aid and comfort to the storm smitten city.

"At the speed we were steaming we hoped to reach Galveston by the night of September 12, four days after the calamity, or on the thirteenth by the latest; and we watched the wide, white wake behind us and marked time with our eager, anxious hearts to the throbbing way we made across the waters with help, with food, with comfort, for the suffering and the stricken.

"The aftermath of that great Gulf storm was still perceptible. Wreckage drifted by us, and the very waters of the Gulf were roiled and murky, and uprooted trees that bore by us were witnesses as well of how the strong hand of the storm had lashed the south coast in its fury.

"As our turning screw drove us on, the time of the equinox was noted yet in sullen skies and in the fitful squalls that followed us. But there were no head winds, and the chief engineer of the Stirling Castle forgot the economies of a lifetime on the penny pinching cruises that had gone before, and he had his stokers and his oilers spend fuel and lubricants with a prodigality that spurred the Stirling Castle, old hobo of the seas, to speed that surprised its creaking, trembling self and every man aboard.

AT nine o'clock on the night of September 11, I stood on the bridge with the Captain, a Welshman named Evan Evans from Cardiff. He was a little, ratty man, curt and jerky of speech, who, when he did talk, let his words run together with the slightest of ellipses between, as the telegraph operator writes a message in long hand.

"It's the follow storm, and we must slacken down," said Captain Evans, and he pointed in the direction of the Louisiana shore and the murky, threatening aspect of the skies to the north of us. 'There's always a follow storm comes along, hafter a typhoon hof the kind we've 'ad,' continued the Captain.

"I nodded my head knowingly, that he might think I was weather wise, and clung tightly to a stanchion as the first fierce blow of the squall came up from behind and made the old Stirling Castle rock down a yawning black hole in the water under her bow.

"Then followed a storm the like of which I, a land-lubber on his first deep saltwater cruise, had never seen. 'The sky turned to blackness indescribable. It was

as though we rocked on mountains of inky waves in a universe from which the sun and stars had died. And then a bolt of blinding white fire would split the dark and run in trellised traceries of glare from the zenith to the sea.

"The boom of the thunder made the black, close pall of night vibrate with the concussion of it. The ship, the air, the very woodwork on which we stood, cracked with the excessive electricity that charged the sea and sky until it was as though one trod and touched off invisible toy torpedos. Wilder, fiercer, higher, rose the storm! And I clutched, paniestricken, at the rail, which rose and rocked with the swaying, staggering ship, and screamed a prayer into the face of the howling wind.

"Then rose the sea in one o'ertopping water wall and struck us with a smash and a crashing rumble. The deck cargo broke loose, and a lesser wave followed over and swept half of the clutter along, bobbing and twirling.

"I was thrown against the pilothouse, and fell stunned, my arm hooked over the lower iron railing at the back of the bridge. Then I came to consciousness, sensible of a shattering shock, to see a stream of fire pour, as though from a ladle, down the mainmast and through the deck into the hull. I say the mainmast; for, like many other tramp steamers, the Stirling Castle did not disdain the helpful aid of the trade winds when they blew fair.

"A dull, hollow boom came from below, and the heave of the whole upper works of the ship followed the lightning stroke. From some of the portholes far down the side I could see a glare of fire.

"A kick in the ribs brought my mind back to the little Welsh Captain and the bridge where I lay, my arm still hooked round the rail.

"Get thee hup, Man!" cried the Captain. 'The lightning she has gone down the mast to the lower hold and fired the hold!'

"But I was dumb and helpless from terror. I only rocked and moaned and gripped my arm tighter to the rail, as I lay half on my face upon the bridge.

"The stokers were now joined to the crew along the rail, dodging the bales and floating boxes awash upon the rocking deck. The roaring of the burning oil could be heard above the storm, and then another mighty wave rolled over the ship from stern to stem and broke in the main hatch, down which the water poured.

"The crates of eggs that had been lashed to the fore-castle now tore away as two great hogheads of sugar smashed against them. I remember looking down on the scene of destruction below me on the deck, such times as the glaring lightning lit up the scene, watching with dull curiosity, like a sick man watches through a window the gutter scourgings pour down a sewer inlet during a summer storm. So the water, sloshing across deck, poured down the broken main hatch as the stern of the steamer tilted up, taking with it the melting sugar from the smashed hogheads, the shattered masses of eggs loosened from the splintered cases, and the other things yet left that had moved and floated on deck. And then it flashed across me that I heard no human voice and saw, when the glare of lightning made the whole scene white, no human form on that rocking deck. They were gone, swept away,—Captain, mates, sailors, stokers, all!

I REMEMBERED now that the Captain had run down from the bridge and had been working at the boats with his men when that last great wave had swept across and smashed the hatches and crashed the great oak hogheads of sugar equally and as easily as it had crushed the flimsy egg crates. They were gone, Captain and crew, every man of them!

"The acrid smell of scorching paint aroused me. The hull above the water line glowed redhot from the burning oil beneath the steel deck that divided the main hold from the lower. A geyser of steam was rising from the broken hatches. The burning oil beneath the steel lower divisional deck had turned the Stirling Castle into a monster floating cooker. The sea water that had poured down the shattered hatches was bubbling like a caldron.

"Dawn was now at hand, the swift coming dawn of the Tropics. The storm had passed on out to sea, and I was alone upon this boiling, burning ship. But she was steel and stanch and still floating. The steam that mounted high in the air would surely mark us plain! There was yet hope for me!

"Galveston and its needs were forgotten. With self-ish, human persistence, I clung but to one dull, aching thought. I was alive and hardly hurt or harmed. I should be saved! The naked, the hungry, the hurt, the perishing, in the tangle of timber and iron and brick that had once been Galveston, must wait for other aid to come. But I was alive, uninjured, and the rest were gone who had sailed this ship with me.

"The little Welshman who had told me of his family at Cardiff, his twin babies who had red hair, who had told too of his petted eldest daughter who could play the parlor organ and sing the hymns he liked—he was not, and the places that knew him would know him no more. He, the brisk, brave little Captain, was gone, dead. The young supercargo, the dark haired young Irishman from Belfast, McKenna, who had told me so proudly that he was saving his money to buy an interest

in a little linen business at home—he too was gone, drowned. The crew, the stokers—those squat, strong fellows who had amused themselves and me with blow forfeit horseplay when not on watch—had likewise been swept away, floating somewhere with swollen faces to the skies. But I was saved, I was spared, alive on a floating caldron!

THE steam hissed higher, singing through the deck seams as though escaping from a giant's kettle. Great foamy bulges of boiled rice came rising out of the hatchways and mushroomed over the deck. And then I saw the deck heave convulsedly and a great, jagged seam opened down the length of it, as a cake cracks in the baking, and up from the hold rose a light yellow mountain of cooked rice.

"The very rivets of the side plates sheered off beneath the resistless pressure of this expanding mass. Then I felt myself lifted up with the bridge, which tore loose with the strain, and was aware of being slowly and even gently turned over and dumped out upon the warm and soggy mass that rose and swelled and spread as only rice in cooking can rise and spread and swell.

"The sunken Stirling Castle now turned over on its starboard side and dropped into the deeps, while the great mass of cooked rice, floating light and high, bobbed and quivered in the outer edges of the whirlpool gurgle of water where the ship had sunk. One last hiss and mighty puff of steam, as the water met the

blazing oil and quenched it, and then silence! And I was drifting off on the slowly widening mass of cooked grain that spread upon the sea, light yellow in color, two hundred feet high, and acres in extent. Five thousand bushels of rice cooked in one vast quantity needs the wide sea to serve it as its dish!

"Here and there some bits of wreckage clung,—a stoker's coat, some barrel staves, a coil of rope, part of the bridge and pilothouse, and the blue banded funnel of what had once been the stanch tramp steamer Stirling Castle. But this was all. The rest was rice cooked rice.

"Mechanically I bent down and scooped up a handful. I had not far to stoop; for I had sunk to my knees by my own weight in the soggy mess. I touched the handful to my lips, and a cry of wonder escaped me. At least I was not to starve while my strange island held together; for the sea water had salted it, the sugar had sweetened it, the eggs had enriched it, the very cases of spices and vanilla and lemon extracts, smashed on the deckload and drained down the hatches with the sea water, had flavored it. I was floating across the Tropic of Cancer on a cooked continent of rice pudding! Saved, with food to stay me till some succor came! But I was cruelly to learn how long the succor was delayed. No vessel crossed my course for two and forty days, and, drifting on unaided, I lived upon the, literally, dessert island for six long, sickening weeks.

I WAS picked up by the good ship Buenos Ayres, on November 3, 1900, at eight bells in the middle watch; in latitude 22, longitude 72. The Buenos Ayres was of the Red D Line. She made that third of November a red letter day for me.

"A boat's crew sent to investigate the queer object sighted off North Caicos found me senseless in the half sunk funnel of the Stirling Castle, which was lying on its side closed by wreckage, as though my last lucid efforts had been to pen myself in from seeing, touching, tasting, or handling the accursed stuff beneath and around me.

"I was near dead of delirium and thirst—and from the latter I still suffer chronically to this day, Sir. But it would seem that I had waited, thus shut in, until my hated island had wasted and sunk in the pitiless sea, rather than the nauseating, all prevalent rice pudding should pass my lips again.

"And this is why, if you must know, my other eccentricities are but whimsies to this one consuming hatred for this ubiquitous viand. This is why I rage like a maniac even to see it on a bill of fare. This is why I fly from it as though it stung like a serpent and bit like an adder, and why I shockingly abuse old or young whom I find addicted to its use. As parsley to a parrot, as a red rag to a bull, as water to a rabid dog—so rice pudding is to Thaddeus Skewton Skidmore, ex-journalist and soldier of the common good."

Thus the tale ended.

THE YELLOW TICKET

Entry No. 55

in Our Prize

Story Competition

BY E. F. BENSON



"Now Go On Again!" Said Boris.

THE flat into which Boris Vane had moved not long ago was on the fifth floor of a huge, newly erected house on Davies-st.; but the inconvenience of the altitude was more than compensated for, to his mind, by the fact that it was not overlooked. Consequently, there was no reason on that account to close the curtains this afternoon before he began his curious game with the enormous dog that lay dozing, muzzle on paw, on the hearthrug. It was a Great Dane by breed, full of courage and jealousy, as is the wont of its kind, and of extraordinary strength. But before Boris began his game he drew both curtains and blinds across the windows, so as to shut out all daylight, and, having locked the door, turned on a couple of electric switches.

Fafner was already familiar with these preliminaries, and during this process of preparation he rose and stretched himself, yawning prodigiously; then he shook himself, so that the heavy silver collar on his neck rattled and clanked. He was perfectly aware that he must have all his wits about him; for there was a whip handy to his master, as well as the plate of biscuits.

The room was but sparsely furnished, and it looked as if this young man who moved lightly and deftly about it was not one who cared much for the easier and softer appurtenances of life. He was well and quietly dressed, of the average height, gray eyed, and of pale complexion, and possessed, you would imagine, of more than the usual decision and activity that characterize so vigorous an age as twenty-six. He, like his name, was only half English; for his mother, who had died some ten years ago, had been a Russian, while of his Irish father he retained only the dimmest of childish memories.

Having shut out all daylight, Boris proceeded to take from a locked cupboard a singular collection of things. First came half a dozen colored linen handkerchiefs, one red, one yellow, one blue, and of other tints. These he put on the table, and added to them another half-dozen small squares of paper, an inch or two across, colored

in exactly the same shades as the handkerchiefs. Each had a bent pin attached to the back of it, which, it might easily be guessed, was intended to attach it quickly and conveniently to some destined place. Then, from the same cupboard, came objects more unaccountable, a further half-dozen of bolsters, some five feet six to six feet in height, covered in very coarse, strong leather. But, for all their evident toughness, they bore marks of violent usage. They were heavily scored and scratched near their ends, and there were frequent perforations right through them, as of savage teeth. Elsewhere pieces of leather had been ripped completely off them, and horsehair stiffly protruded. These Boris set in a row against the long, empty wall of his room, while Fafner, now wide awake and alert, began to growl and show his great white teeth. But that, it seemed, was a mistake; for he lay down again with an apologetic whimper as Boris took up the dog-whip.

Then he made another singular addition to this museum of strange things; namely, half a dozen masks of no comic or extravagant kind, but simply representing the commonplace faces of men and women. He hung one on the top of each of the stiff, upright bolsters; so that they appeared now as rough, swaddled imitations

of human figures. Then Fafner got up again with tense, quivering limbs as Boris snatched up the half-dozen colored handkerchiefs and hung one on each of the bolster figures.

"Now!" he said.

WITH one bound the dog was at the throat (where the Great Danes always attack) of the figure on which Boris had hung the yellow handkerchief, and in a moment it was on the ground, and the dog's fangs were buried in the leather.

"Good boy! That's enough," said Boris.

But the lust and joy of biting was on the brute, and with forepaws braced he still tore furiously at the prone bolster.

"Drop it!" said Boris in another voice.

Fafner gave it one more shake, and, conscious that he had chosen right, came for his biscuit.

Boris replaced the figure, and now, instead of putting the handkerchiefs on the dummies, he pinned to them the more insignificant squares of colored paper. The dog had practised this more difficult form of the trick before; but he was not quite certain of it yet, and this afternoon at his first attempt he attacked the figure to which his master had pinned a red paper. Next moment he was cowering beneath the blow of the whip across his brindled back.

"Go on again!" said Boris.

The great dog whimpered and apologized a moment, then questioned the figures with his small brown eyes. This time he made no mistake, and was rewarded by an ecstatic worrying of the dummy, and subsequently by a biscuit. Then his master changed and rechanged the position of the tickets, testing Fafner's sense of color, and the lesson proceeded successfully until an interruption came in the form of a tap at the door twice repeated. Boris recognized the manner of it, and opened, and the man and dog together welcomed the incomer.

HE too apparently recognized the nature of this curious game; for he smiled at the row of ludicrous dummies. "Train up a dog in the way he should go, Boris," he said, "and give me a drink. Something rather strong, please. I've had the deuce of a time making out the first list: There's a friend of mine in it—makes one feel sick."

"List of ten?" asked Boris.

"Yes: never mind about that now. There's a meeting tonight, you know. I will tell you all about it then. How has Fafner been doing?"

"Quite intelligently. By the way, I want to test him in one thing more. You see it is important that he should not fly at—at things on which anybody puts the yellow square. I must see if he understands that it has to be I who puts it on. Just try him while I get your drink."

Charlie Meers laughed. "I think I prefer your remaining close to me," he said, "when I meddle with yellow tickets. Otherwise, when I take it up—"

As he spoke he took it off the dummy that lay on the floor and held it up. Instantly the white fangs were bared, and Charlie hastily threw it from him.

"Fafner, come here!" said his master.

"Oh, don't beat him, please," said Charlie. "I hate seeing you strike him."

"But he must understand," said Boris.

For another quarter of an hour they practised the dog over this point, making him see it was only when his master handled the yellow ticket that he must fly at whatever it was affixed to. More than once, with a whine from Charlie and a whine from the dog, the heavy whip descended; but in an amazingly short time Fafner grasped the idea that it was his master only who gave the signal for attack.

"And now put the yellow ticket on yourself," said